

CLAIM LISTING

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1 through 21 (Canceled).

22. (Previously presented) A barrel for use with a tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a tapered main section disposed between an insertion tip and a finger grip, said tapered main section having a main section taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15;
said insertion tip having a plurality of petals; and
said finger grip having a first region, a gripping region, and a second region,
wherein said first region intersects with said tapered main section at a first plane having a first outer dimension, said gripping region intersects with said first region and has a second outer dimension, said second region intersects with said gripping region and has a third outer dimension, said first outer dimension being larger than said second outer dimension and said third outer dimension being larger than said second outer dimension, and

wherein said first outer dimension defines a maximum outer dimension of said barrel.

23. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip.

24. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said third outer dimension is equal to said first outer dimension.

Claim 25 (Canceled).

26. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of more than about 0.66.

27. (Original) The assembly as in claim 22, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 2 to about 3.

28. (Currently amended) A barrel for use with a tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a tapered main section;

~~adjacent an insertion tip~~ adjacent said tapered main section, said insertion tip and said tapered main section intersecting at a first plane; and

a finger grip adjacent said tapered main section and opposite said insertion tip, ~~said insertion tip and said tapered main section intersecting at a first plane, said tapered main section, said insertion tip and said finger grip are each positioned about a portion of a center axis, wherein said finger grip~~ [[has]]having a first region adjacent a gripping region and a second region adjacent said gripping region opposite said first region,

wherein said first region intersects with said tapered main section at a second plane having a maximum outer dimension, said gripping region intersects with said first region at a third plane and has a second outer dimension, said maximum outer dimension being larger than said second outer dimension, ~~[[and]]~~ said first region curves away from said tapered main section at said second plane to said gripping region, said second region intersecting with said gripping region at a fourth plane, said second region extending from said fourth plane to an end of the barrel opposite of said insertion tip, said gripping region being substantially smaller than said first region and said second region, and

wherein said tapered main section has a taper that decreases from said second plane to said first plane, and

wherein said portions of said center axis in said tapered main section, said insertion tip and said finger grip are in the same plane.

29. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said maximum

outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 55% to 85% of an overall length of said barrel.

30. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 60% to 75% of an overall length of said barrel.

31. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said tapered main section has a main section taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15.

32. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said tapered main section has a main section taper ratio of about 1.08 to about 1.13.

33. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said insertion tip further comprises a plurality of petals.

34. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of between about 0.66 and about 1.6.

35. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 34, wherein said taper ratio is between about 0.7 and 0.9.

36. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 33, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 0.8 to about 3.

37. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 36, wherein said petal length-to-width ratio is over about 2.

38. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said maximum outer dimension is about 10% to about 30% larger than said second outer.

39. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said gripping region has a length, and wherein said gripping region has an outer dimension that is substantially smaller than an outer dimension of said first region and an outer dimension of said second region at least at one plane along said length of said gripping region.

40. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said maximum dimension is a maximum dimension of the barrel.

41. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said second region intersects said gripping region at a plane and terminates at an end of the barrel, and wherein said second region has a maximum outer dimension at said end.

42. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein the barrel is formed by a two-part molding operation.

43. (New) The assembly as in claim 28, wherein said second outer dimension of said gripping region is uniform from said third plane to said fourth plane, and wherein said second region increases in diameter from said fourth plane to said end of the barrel opposite of said insertion tip.